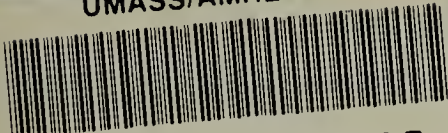


UMASS/AMHERST



312066016681119

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Education

Charter School Application
Designated Contact Person

Please provide the Executive Office of Education with the following information identifying a designated contact person for the group submitting an application for charter school status. This form *must* be filed along with the charter school application no later than February 15, 1994. Please mail all required materials to:

Secretary of Education
ATTN: Charter Schools
Executive Office of Education
One Ashburton Place, Room 1401
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

Tel: (617) 727-1313

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS
COLLECTION
JUN 08 1994

University of Massachusetts
Depository Copy
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Please print or type:

Name of organization/group filing for charter school status

Contact Person Name:	ALAN M. MILNER	
Signature:	Alan M. Milner	Date: 2/15/1994
Title:	Co-Founder	
Address:	29 WASHINGTON STREET	
City:	GLOUCESTER	
State:	MA	
Zip:	01930	
Telephone:	(617) 445-6009 508-283-8327	
Fax:	(617) 445-2291	

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Education

Charter School Application

I/We, the undersigned charter school applicant(s), do hereby certify that the information provided herein and filed with the Executive Office of Education on this the 15th day of February (month) of the year 1994, is to the best of my/our knowledge, truthful and accurate.

(This signature sheet *must* be attached to the application when it is filed.)

Name: WAYNE MARSHALL Signature: [Signature] Date: 2/15/94
Address: 146 Main St City: Gloucester State: MA Zip: 01930
Tel: 508-281-4822

Name: WENDY FITTING Signature: [Signature] Date: 2-15-94
Address: 242 E MAIN ST City: GLoucester State: MA Zip: 01930
Tel: 508 281 7836

Name: W. BRIAN GALVIN Signature: [Signature] Date: 2/15/94
Address: 26 Mt Vernon St. City: Gloucester State: MA Zip: 01930
Tel: 508-283-1751

Name: ALAN MILNER Signature: [Signature] Date: 2/15/94
Address: 29 WASHINGTON ST. City: Gloucester State: MA Zip: 01930
Tel: 508-283-8327

Name: ELI GOODMAN Signature: [Signature] Date: 2/15/94
Address: 85 Prescott St City: Cambridge State: MA Zip: 02138
Tel: (617) 492-2464

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____
Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Tel: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____
Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Tel: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____
Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Tel: _____

If more space is required, please attach additional sheets.

Executive Office of Education, One Ashburton Place, Room 1401, Boston, MA, 02108

\

1. Mission Statement:

Education is indeed everybody's business, but publicly-funded education has been conducted under a banner reading 'Innovators - Keep Out' for so long now that we have forgotten that education is no one's special province. Nevertheless, the statistics clearly indicate that the American public school system is failing to fulfill its mission of providing an effective education for all Americans.

American students are falling behind their counterparts in Europe and Asia. The national high school drop-out rate now exceeds 50% of enrollments over a typical four year period. Fewer than 50% of the students that graduate from high school go on to higher education, and the current unemployment rate among high school graduates exceeds 50% of new graduates. In a recent incident, New England Telephone reported that it had to test more than 25,000 job applicants to fill 250 entry level positions. Recent studies indicate that as many as 75 million Americans may be functional illiterates, and that as many as 25% of the students graduating from college graduate unable to read or write well enough to flip hamburgers for McDonald's, let alone build aircraft MacDonal Douglas.

Again and again in our research, we have heard that 'kids want to do real stuff.' Time and time again, we have been told that kids are being turned off by school because they know that the schools they are attending are not teaching them anything that will help them get a job in the real world.

According to the students we have surveyed, school is boring, irrelevant, and immaterial to their lives. Classes are too long, the subject matter seems completely divorced from the experience of their daily lives, and the teachers appear to be either ignoring or uncaring about the difficult circumstances under which many of them live. In order to bring these turned-off, disaffected underachievers back to education, we have to offer them an alternative that is more relevant to their own lives, that empowers students and help them to feel worthwhile about themselves and each other.

Recent research substantiates that there are a number of different learning styles, and an even larger number of divergent learning techniques, that appear to be naturally occurring phenomena in most individuals. Teachers themselves have never been taught how to accommodate themselves to the learning strategies of their students and usually demand, instead, that student learn the way that they, the teachers, want to teach. It is our philosophy that both the teacher and the school system must learn to recognize, identify and adapt themselves to teach the way that each student learns best rather than attempting to force the student to learn the way the teacher teaches.

Part of the difficulty lies in the confusion that surrounds pedagogical technique. One hundred years ago, in one room school houses across America, millions of boys and girls were taught to read and write, do their figures, and participate in the economic, political and social activities of their times with little or no difficulty. 'Learning Disorders' simply did not exist. During the past two decades there has been an epidemic of new 'learning disabilities' that were unknown to previous generations of teachers, but it is now becoming clear to educational reformers that there may be more 'teaching disabilities' than there are 'learning disabilities.'

Teaching students how to think - or enabling them to learn how to learn - requires a completely different approach from the ones that are currently in use in American schools, an approach that eschews rote memorization and testing in favor of developing goal-oriented learning strategies based upon real-world activities, and substitutes real-life experience for the artificial environment of the classroom. The Gloucester Youth Partnership Charter School proposes to accomplish these objectives with a student-oriented educational system that combines an extensive vocational educational program offering students opportunities to develop marketable skills with an academic program that enables students to design their own curriculum, work independently and proceed at their own pace while working together in a cooperative atmosphere.

This model depends on two basic components: A computer-aided educational system that enables students to work independently at their own pace, and an extensive work-study program that will enable students to earn spending money while they gain exposure to a wide variety of occupations, from which they will select a business or occupation on which they will concentrate in a one-year apprenticeship program.

Computers can be an invaluable asset in this new type of customized teaching systems because they enable students to work independently and together and the same time. The addition of computers to an otherwise traditional educational system accelerates learning in both traditional subjects and new learning models. Using computers to teach other subjects helps students become comfortable with computers, which is important because our students need to 'know' computers, and know how to use computers in order to get things done to qualify for the jobs of the future. Nevertheless, while computers may be an essential educational tool, there remains a real world into which students must graduate, and this real world demands a wide range of skills in addition to computer literacy. As important as it may be to 'know computers,' it is even more important to know how to learn, and this requires knowing how to think.

The proposal for the Gloucester Youth Partnership Charter School addresses both of these needs with a program that makes extensive use of computer technology to free students from the drudge work of learning in the traditional classroom, and provides a wide range of apprenticeship activities to help our students gain a wide range of 'real-life' skills needed to compete successfully in the marketplace of the future.

2. School Objectives:

The basic premise of our approach to the Charter School concept is that learning requires the proper attitude for learning, and that attitude depends, to a very large extent, on the social conditions in the learning environment. The objective of our school is to provide a democratic educational environment where students are self-regulating (because they will not be allowed to remain in the program if they are not), self-motivated, and inner-directed. We propose to accomplish this by creating an 'educational workplace' where performance in school leads directly to further educational and vocational activities through which students can earn an income while they are getting an education. This work-study approach, which has been working well on the college level for many years (most notably at Northeastern University) will greatly change the inner and outer aspects of secondary education, making it more attractive to students who previously considered school a meaningless intrusion on their lives.

In the development of a 'real-life' model for education, we have observed that, in the real world, we do not divide workers into groups on the basis of their age. On the contrary, we divide workers into groups on the basis of their ability, and promote them on the basis of their performance. In school, however, we divide students primarily on the basis of age, and secondarily on the basis of achievement. Our model utilizes a goal-oriented approach in which students can progress at their own pace in any given subject, rather than a more traditional class year approach in which students are expected to complete specific subjects in each of the four high school class years (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior.) Therefore, achievement within this structure is measured on the basis of the achievement of specific learning objectives which are adopted by agreement between the student and the teacher at the beginning of each semester. In this model, the student must propose a learning plan that will guide them toward the accomplishment of the academic and non-academic objectives, while the teacher must evaluate the student's plan to insure that all of the required objectives will be met.

A. Academic Objectives for Gloucester Youth Partnership Charter School will include:

Minimal Performance Standards in Verbal and Written Comprehension

During the first year of the Gloucester Youth Partnership Charter School program, students who are not fluent in both verbal and written English will receive intensive remedial instruction to enable them to meet the requirement for demonstrated proficiency in reading and writing English. Students who cannot achieve acceptable verbal and written comprehension sufficient for performance in the program will be referred to the Gloucester public school system for 766 Core evaluation before continuing further in the program.

Demonstrated proficiency in the reading and writing of English

Completion of required readings to include selections from the Great Books of the Western World, Classics of American, English, French, Spanish, Italian and Russian Literature; Maintenance of a personal educational journal documenting the student's educational experience, and submission of at least one short story, one essay, one set of poems in various styles. and a one-act play.

Demonstrated proficiency in a foreign language

This unit requires native English speakers to learn at least one other language, and also requires students for whom English is a second language to demonstrate a proficiency in their native language. Elective Concentrations, one each from the following disciplines:

Demonstrated proficiency in Mathematics

Introductory Algebra, Plane Geometry and business math, including Basic bookkeeping

Maintenance of a personal financial budget documenting income and expenditures over the three year period, preparation and submission of income tax returns.

Demonstrated proficiency in Science

Requires completion of basic courses in earth science, physics, chemistry and biology, accomplished through readings, field trips, and laboratory experiments.

Demonstrated proficiency in History

Requires completion of course work on ancient, medieval, Renaissance and modern history within a contemporary cultural context.

Completion in a course on American citizenship

Requires completion of a concentration on American history, government. law and civics.

Demonstrated proficiency in Economics

Requires completion of basic course in economics.

Demonstrated proficiency in the humanities

Largely ill-defined in most curricula, the humanities include psychology, philosophy, and comparative religion. We believe that it is important for all students to have a basic understanding of other religions as well as their own, so we will teach comparative religion from a historical standpoint. In addition to introductory course work in classical philosophy and psychology, we will also require all students to take a course in moral philosophy covering rational basis for normative social behavior.

Demonstrated proficiency in the arts

Completion of a course in art appreciation

Completion of a concentration in at least one art form

Completion of a course in music appreciation

Completion of a concentration in at least one musical instrument, theater arts or dance.

Demonstrated proficiency in the use of computer systems

- Proficiency in one or more word processing programs
- Proficiency in one or more spreadsheet programs
- Proficiency in one or more database management systems
- Proficiency in the use of communications software and online information systems

B. Non-academic goals for student performanceDevelopment of Internalized Self-Management Systems

Incoming students will focus on the development of good learning skills - learning how to learn through the use of internalized self-management systems, which give the student a basic understanding of how to organize intellectual work by breaking up dauntingly large projects into easily doable tasks. Attention will be given to remedial instruction to correct previously uncorrected deficiencies in basic educational skills, such as reading, writing, and basic mathematics. In the non-academic area, however, the focus of attention is the amelioration of emotional, psychological and behavioral problems affecting the student's performance in educational environments. This is accomplished through the establishment, demonstration and enforcement of appropriate behavioral standards required for students of the Gloucester Youth Partnership Charter School. Demonstrated ability to comply with the school's rules and regulations are considered a pre-requisite for 'acceleration' into the vocational training programs described below.

Preliminary Work Study Projects

Once students have completed the ISMS concentration, they will be eligible to propose and implement their entry-level work-study projects. Each work-study cadre will consist of a group of students who will participate in at least six three-week work-study arranged through the school, working under the supervision of adults who are experienced working professional in the specific field. Work-study projects will be selected each year on the basis of the interests expressed by the students themselves. Mentors will be recruited and paid a stipend for their participation in the program. Students will work in groups of three or more in the work-study program and will earn both course credit and wages according to the number of hours worked.

Advanced Work Study Projects

Upon the completion of the preliminary work-study rotation, students will be able to progress to the advanced work-study program. In this program, students will work in smaller groups in at least three six-week projects arranged through the school, working under the supervision of an adult who an experienced working professional in the specific field.

Full Year Apprenticeship Program

Students who have completed the advanced work-study program can progress to the full-year apprenticeship program, selecting one discipline and devoting a minimum of 16 weeks during the school year to the pursuit of that discipline, and will be required to present a report documenting their accomplishments in their apprenticeships. The apprenticeship model requires a one-to-one relationship between the student and a working professional in the student's chosen field.

Completion of Independent Study Projects

At the beginning of each year, each student will identify a project that he or she will undertake during the course of the year. Each project must be proposed in advance in writing to the Head Teacher of the school, who will accept or reject proposals on the basis of the merits of the project and the student's ability to undertake the project and achieve its objectives. Projects may encompass any prosocial activity, ranging from community service projects to challenging personal reading programs. Monthly progress reports will be required, along with a final report describing what was attempted and what was achieved. Students may work individually or in teams of two or more.

Athletic Commitment

All students must be enrolled in the local YMCA or YWCA, or a private health club, and must present documented evidence of their participation in an approved fitness program. In addition, each student must agree to participate in at least one team sport per year via a third party vendor or, at their own option, students may substitute individual sports, such as swimming, running, or martial arts, for team sports such as baseball, basketball and football.

Social Commitment

The school will host a minimum of at least one social event per month. The student body will be broken up into the requisite number of teams, and each team will take responsibility for organizing one social event per year. Attendance and participation in social events is mandatory for all students.

Participation in Charter School governance systems

The entire student body of the school will function as a government of the whole, a working experiment in democracy. School officers will be elected on a semi-annual basis, and will meet as the Executive Committee on a weekly basis and report to the entire community on a monthly basis. All operating issues will be presented to the student body for approval, and all regular disciplinary matters will be referred to the student body.

C. Community environment do you hope to foster at your school?

The Gloucester Youth Partnership Charter School will be a student-enabled environment. What we mean by this is that the students will play an active role in the development of the curriculum, the specification of the syllabus, and the implementation of the services offered by the school. Students will also participate in the management of the school, beginning with janitorial services and expanding to include every aspect of the operation of the school. Students will help to renovate the physical space, and help maintain the space after it has been renovated. They will also help prepare meals (students will be asked to eat breakfast and lunch together as a group, but will prepare their own meals collectively and clean up afterward: sending out for pizza will not be considered an acceptable behavior in this school), work in the office, answer telephones, make copies, make coffee, and all of the other things that people working together in small environments normally do together.

On the political level, students will participate in all decision-making activities within the school, subject only to the overriding veto of the Head Teacher and the Executive Director of the parent agency. Students will form and organize all events and activities for the school, but they will also participate in the school's disciplinary system, and may be asked to sit in judgment of their fellow students, just as we are asked to sit in judgment over our peers in a court of law. Curriculum decisions will be made on the basis of the expressed interests of the student body, tempered by the administration's perceptions about the 'doability' of a given project or activity.

The environment we hope to foster on the basis of this model will be a democratically managed just community in which the students will take responsibility both for themselves and for each other. While there have been experimental precedents that have used this model with much success, this will be the first time that a publicly chartered and funded school will enroll its students in its own decision-making process. The approach is obviously experimental, but it reflects the widespread yearnings of the students with whom we have spoken to have some measure of control over their own lives while they are in school, and believe that giving them a large measure of control will encourage them to view the school as 'their own thing,' and treat it accordingly as something to be used rather than something to be avoided.

3. Statement of Need

A. Need for this type of school?

Gloucester, Massachusetts, is a unique city in a unique situation. Isolated from the rest of Cape Anne (which is, itself, isolated from the rest of the state), Gloucester has been in socioeconomic decline since the mid-fifties. Once world-renown as a ship-building center, a resort area with a distinguished population of artists and writers, Gloucester's industrial base has been reduced to a single industry, fishing and related services. When the once-thriving fishing industry was eclipsed by foreign competition, international treaties that significantly reduced the Gloucester fleet's fishing range, increasing operating costs, and environmental concerns about husbanding a dwindling natural resource, and health concerns about the safety of local seafood, the entire community went into a long-term recession.

The effects of the recession are obvious. The Gloucester fishing fleet has shrunk to a mere 10% of the number of boats that berthed here a generation ago. The reduced size of the fleet has impacted businesses that serve the fishing industry - boat yards, ships fitters and the like, and the Gorton fish packing plant, the town's largest employer, is the last of a dozen fish packing operations that once provided hundreds of jobs for local residents. The fishing industry, already hard hit by competition and rising costs, is now being beset by new government regulations that are making it even more difficult for the fleet to bring home a profit-making catch. The town's economic problems are also obvious from the number of closed and empty stores on Main Street, the comparatively under-developed harbor area, decreasing real estate values, the closing of once prosperous businesses and a gradual decline in net income for the community as whole.

One of the largest cities in the state geographically, with 26 square miles within the precincts of the city, Gloucester has the third smallest population of any city in Massachusetts. As a result, the city is the one of the least densely-populated in the state, increasing the cost of service delivery while decreasing the net value of the real estate tax base. Despite its long-term financial problems, Gloucester is still relatively affluent by ordinary standards, with a reported per capita income of \$13,644 as recently as 1987. By comparison with the relative affluence of neighboring communities such as Essex, Ipswich, Hamilton, and Wenham, which are among the wealthiest in the state, however, Gloucester is clearly ~~the poorest~~ city or town on Cape Anne. In addition, although the city is overwhelming white, it also remains true that Gloucester is largely a city of immigrants, predominantly Italian and Portuguese fishing families and their descendants, making Gloucester the North End of Cape Anne.

Demographically speaking, Gloucester may be characterized as the least diverse city in the state, with a population that is 99% white, according to the 1990 census. This situation is changing rapidly, however, with the establishment of several public housing projects that are attracting new minorities to the city. The influx of new residents is placing increased stress on the city's limited social services, and on its school system, bringing big city problems to a small town environment that is ill-equipped to handle them. Despite economic decline of the community, and all of Cape Anne, Gloucester has maintained a tradition of cultural integrity has survived adversity to serve as the foundation for the renaissance that is now beginning to address many of the community's problems. The current concern about improved education is indicative of the community's organized response to the problems faced by Gloucester residents.

Gloucester ranks 19th in the state in terms of the percentage of high school graduates among its adult residents, and 16th in terms of the percentage of residents with college degrees. When Gloucester was a fishing center, and jobs were plentiful in fishing and associated industries, it was not uncommon for men to leave school early and taking up fishing as a career. Now, as fishing continues to decline, the city must face the fact that it must improve its educational services to create an educated work force that will attract new industries to the city, but Gloucester currently ranks 29th out of 36 cities in terms of the percentage of the city's budget (37%) spent on education. Gloucester's most important problem, both economically and educationally, is that the city is relatively isolated, on the tip of Cape Anne, making it unattractive to new industry, and putting its students relatively far away from the resources of an urban center like Boston. With its historical relationship with the sea, and its relative dependence on the fishing industry for its financial base, Gloucester is in the unenviable position of having a dying industrial base with nothing to replace it. In order to attract new business and industry to Gloucester, and to Cape Anne, the city must work toward the creation of a highly educated work force consisting of well-trained and well-motivated workers, and use this work force as a resource, promoting relocation to the community on the basis of the quality of its educational institutions.

B. Explain why a Charter School would help to effectively address this need

There are two different bodies of opinion about the Gloucester public school system. One group of students, those who are doing well, maintain that Gloucester has an excellent school system, if you are willing to put in the effort required to get good value from the resources that exist here. There is another group of students, those who are not doing well, who are increasingly disaffected from the public school system. By and large, this group of students does not expect to go on to college, but they know that they are not receiving an educational that will prepare them to earn a living once they leave high school. This encourages an increasing drop out rate among this group from both middle and high school.

On the basis of focus groups, individual interviews, and the literature of the field, it is imperative to match the beliefs of this student population, and pace them into a new appreciation of themselves. A school system in which students play an important role in determining the curriculum, the syllabus, and even the pedagogical technique offers a stark contrast to the system now being used in Gloucester, providing an alternative to the high percentage of students that are now dropping out of Gloucester High.

On the basis of the foregoing analysis of the situation in Gloucester, it becomes abundantly clear that a self-directed, self-paced educational model, with short, intensive teaching units interspersed with other activities in a depressurized, rehumanized environment, would be the polar opposite to the situation in the Gloucester school system. The proposed model offers students an opportunity to get paid for staying in school, instead of getting paid to leave it. The apprenticeship model also enables the school to provide meaningful exposure to wide range of occupations which is limited only by the imaginations of the student population, and significant training in any field in which a student expresses an interest.

In point of fact, the apprenticeship model is the only educational model that addresses the question of how to provide meaningful job training in a wide variety of disciplines to high school students. The vocational high school model can only provide training in a limited number of disciplines, requires students to 'buy a pig in a poke' by enrolling in such a specialized school before they are sure about which careers they want to pursue, and usually delivers a second-rate education based on outmoded equipment and techniques.

The Gloucester Youth Partnership Charter School offers a model that can enable any school system to reduce its instructional costs, reduce amount of time that students spend on basic academics, and increase the quality and quantity of the vocational education services delivered by the school without having to invest in new buildings, furnishings, and equipment. These objectives are achieved through increased utilization of computer aided instruction, changes in pedagogical technique in which the ability to find information replaces the outmoded pedagogy of teaching students to retain useless or irrelevant information, through the involvement of new kind of teacher - the mentor - who takes on students as apprentices and teaches them a given business, trade, or profession the old fashioned way - immediate total immersion, working in real time on real projects to gain an understanding about, and a feeling for, that trade, craft or business.

4. School Demographics

A. Location

The school will be located in downtown Gloucester in a combination storefront and office complex on Main Street, several of which are presently vacant and available. The vocational education and other services will be provided off-site at various vendor locations.

B. Rationale for location selected?

Main Street in Gloucester is an old-fashioned downtown district, a magnet for the city's young people, who congregate along this retail and business thoroughfare in the afternoons and evenings, on weekends and holidays. Regardless of where you live in Gloucester, Main Street is where you go for ethnic foods, specialty foods and other goods, retails goods and services because, unlike most communities, Gloucester has no real malls of its own. (The nearest are in Peabody and Danvers.) We have decided to settle into this downtown location as a contribution to the downtown revitalization effort, putting the school's occupancy budget to work maintaining the downtown area a viable shopping district and service center.

C. Student Population

The specific focus of the Gloucester Youth Partnership Charter School is on high risk students who have refused to enter Gloucester High, have dropped out of Gloucester High or are on the verge of dropping out of the high school, and specifically on non-academically oriented students who nevertheless show an interest in and propensity for both manual trades, arts and crafts.

D. Anticipated Enrollment

We anticipate an initial enrollment of 64 students, with a 80% retention rate, and a year-end population of 72 students from 64 enrollments. Any Gloucester resident who is between 12 and 18 years of age may apply for admission to the program. Because the program is ungraded, and does not use class years to differentiate between students, all subsequent admissions after the first year will be based on the number of vacancies created by attrition.

E. Grade Levels Served

Because this is an open-ended, ungraded environment, we cannot quantify the program in terms of grade levels served. For the sake of convenience, however, these services may be viewed as equivalent to a four year high school program for grades 9, 10, 11, and 12.

5. Recruiting and Marketing

Student Recruitment

In order to insure that all residents have an equal opportunity to consider and apply for admission to the Gloucester Youth Partnership Charter School, a circular describing the school and including a preliminary application form will be distributed to all Gloucester public school students in the seventh, eighth and ninth grades. Two separate distributions will take place a month apart, one through the public schools and one through the mail. A special effort will be made to reach prospective students who have already dropped out of school, or who are at risk of dropping out from the eighth grade through a street outreach program conducted through friends, family, siblings and significant others to insure that all prospective students in the high risk category have an opportunity to consider enrolling in the program. A public information campaign utilizing local cable access television will also be used to inform the public about the program and encourage prospective students to apply.

Marketing Plans

The Gloucester Youth Partnership Charter School, as a newly established organization, will work through established community based organizations to promote the concept of the school, using established community mechanisms in its outreach efforts.

Prospective students who indicate an interest in the program will be invited to open houses during which the educational approach will be described and demonstrated with hands-on experience with the actual hardware and software that will be used in the program. In addition, prospective students will also be asked to participate in a New Careers Workshop program that will encourage prospective students to think about real-life careers that they may begin through one of the Charter School's apprenticeship programs.

In order to counteract the long-term effects of adverse economic and social circumstances, the Gloucester Youth Partnership Charter School will require that all new students preface their freshman year at the School with an eight-week Project Adventure residential program that will be specially designed to introduce participants to the educational model that will be employed in the Charter School program.

6. Admissions Policy

All students seeking admission to the Gloucester Youth Partnership Charter School ~~will be screened~~ to insure that they meet the minimal academic standards for the school. Verbal competency in English (after one-year of intensive ESL for those who are not competent in English upon admission see Academic Objectives, above), and an acceptable school attendance and behavior record will be required for all students being admitted to the program.

All students who apply for the Gloucester Youth Partnership Charter School will be asked to meet at the school with an admissions committee, consisting of the head teacher of the school a representative of the student body and a representative from the school's parents (after the first year of the program), during which the program will be described and explained.

All students who pass the preliminary interview will be asked to submit an essay describing why they want to enroll in the Gloucester Youth Partnership Charter School, and to take a competitive examination. The results from the essay competition will be used to evaluate student motivation on the basis of the content of the essays. The competitive examination results will be used in conjunction with the student's academic record to determine the student's academic performance and capacity.

If the number of students who pass through the screening process exceed the number of positions available, the vacancies will be awarded through a lottery for eligible applicants, with separate drawing for equal numbers of boys and girls.

The process of qualifying students for admission to this program is necessitated by the nature of the program, which requires a great deal of self-motivation. It would be unfair and contra productive to admit students who are not qualified for this kind of regimen. The use of a lottery to select the finalists for admission to the program provides a responsible, non-discriminatory admissions process.

7. Profile of Founding Coalition

A: Description of the Founding Coalition

The Gloucester Youth Partnership Charter School is a newly-formed coalition that includes community-activists, a former city councilor, a minister (the school will, of course, be non-denominational), several educators, and the director of the state's drug and alcohol hotline, all of whom either work or live in Gloucester. The founders of the coalition have a positive commitment to opening up the membership of the Board of Trustees to a broad spectrum of potential participants, including teachers, parents, students, and community residents. The group has been working closely with Alan Milner, who is the managing partner of the Nonprofit Organization Technical Assistance Group (NOTAG), who will provide technical assistance with respect to the operation of the school and the programs its offers.

B: Background of the Affiliation

The Charter School is the first of a number of projects that the Gloucester Youth Partnership will undertake during the next two years to provide education, vocational training, job opportunities, and community revitalization activities. Other plans include the establishment of a 24 hour youth center to keep kids off the streets and out of trouble, a cottage industries program to provide employment for young adults, the revitalization of the community's tourist industry, and the development of new ecological and environmental training programs to protect and augment the area's natural resources.

8. Timetable

March	Award Announcement Press Release announcing establishment of Charter School Liaison meeting with School Department Planning meeting with Principals Identify primary work-study sites for Year 1 Begin recruitment of mentors for apprenticeship program
April	Develop tools to review student records Develop essay competition model Develop competitive examination for student screenings
May	Begin screenings of eighth grade students for admission to program Begin physical plant renovations Begin teacher recruitment process Initiate competitive examinations
June	Review applications - make final assessments Announcement of student assignments Complete teacher recruitment Complete physical plant renovations
July	Begin summer Upward Bound Program Begin teacher training Begin curriculum development Install computer hardware Install computer software Begin recruitment of work-study mentors
August	Begin mentorship training program Complete Upward Bound program Complete furnishings of new installation
September	First day of school

9. Evidence of Support

A: Scope of Community Support for Program

This is a preliminary application for the 1995 school year. During the interim between now and then, the founders of the coalition plan to hold a series of events to organize community support for the project. The preliminary application for 1995 startup is viewed as an essential step in organizing Gloucester to get an increased share of state and federal dollars for development and education. We view this submission as the first step in a long process.

B: Documentation of Community Support

See above

10. Educational Program

(Note: The educational objectives cited in item 2 above should be considered an integral part of the description of the proposed educational program and should be reviewed as the detail for the specific instructional methodologies for each unit discussed in section 2.)

Computers in the Classroom

This proposal is based upon the theory that computers can enable each individual student to proceed at his or her own pace, in a self-directed group learning environment in which students will learn better and faster than they can in a traditional classroom, creating opportunities for closely-monitored 'work-study' programs in which our students - low-income inner-city youths from the state's most disadvantaged community - can earn an income while developing good working habits and learning marketable skills that they will have to fall back on for the rest of their lives.

In a traditional educational environment, the learning process is controlled by certain economic and social imperatives. The school year begins in September and ends in June, regardless of how long it actually takes individual students to complete the year's work. The school day begins at 8:30 AM and ends at 2:30 PM not because this is the best arrangement for the student, but rather because teaching is a job, and teachers only want to work during 'normal' working hours. The problem with this is that 'normal working hours' may not be the best 'learning hours' for some students. Some students might be better off working during the day, and attending classes in the afternoon or evening.

In traditional school systems most students are forced to cruise along with each other within the narrow constraints of what the school system has deemed to be the appropriate curriculum and syllabus for their age group. Decisions about what the student should be able to accomplish in each grade are arbitrarily determined on the basis of past performance of students in that age category. Better students are held back while slower students are being left behind, and the ones in the middle are being short changed because most of them are coasting rather than extending themselves to increase their reach.

The Charter School movement is the first step in a new educational revolution that will inevitably follow in the footsteps of the technological possibilities unleashed by the invention of the personal computer, and it is our belief in the advantages of a 'totally computerized educational environment' that fuels our commitment to the 'classroom of the future' that we intend to create at the Gloucester Youth Partnership Charter School.

In our totally computerized educational environment, students will be able to custom-design their own educational experience on the basis of their individual interests, earning the right to pursue those interests by earning credits for the completion of required courses. Each credit earned entitles the student to additional time on the computer system for their elective interests. The completion of a unit unlocks new study units, allowing each student to move through the curriculum at their own pace.

The computer is the most liberating artifact ever to enter a public school classroom precisely because the computer gives us the capacity to liberate the classroom from the outmoded teaching techniques of the past, making room for the new learning strategies of the future, but this is only true if we use them properly.

For the past 10 years, computers in school have been primarily a subject to be studied rather than a basic tool to be understood and used in the larger process of acquiring an education. In our 'totally computerized educational environment,' computers will be liberated from the computer lab to occupy their rightful places on each student's desk.

Rather than having access to a computer for a few hours a week, as is the case in most schools, students will use 'their' computers to participate in classroom discussions, conduct research, write papers, communicate with their peers, and take examinations covering the entire academic syllabus.

The value of computer-aided instruction is, first of all, that teachers are freed from the repetitive task of presenting information to students, and concentrate instead upon assisting students having difficulties with specific subjects, conducting classroom discussions, organizing field trips and other educational activities. Secondly, computer aided instruction will enable us to concentrate five hours of instruction into a three hour period, giving students the time and the opportunity to pursue a larger agenda. Finally, we believe that disadvantaged students will enjoy their exposure to computers, and will view computer-aided education as a privilege rather than an intrusion. We will enhance this aspect of the equation by allowing students free access to computers during all of the hours that the center is open to students.

In our educational environment, teachers will not be disciplinarians or task masters. They will be learning associates whose function is to assist students in learning how to learning, focusing their attention on specific projects. While we will have at least one teacher in each major disciplinary area.

What is the role of the teacher in the totally computerized educational environment? In many respects, our classroom of the future closely resembles the one-room school house of the American West, with students of different ages and different levels of development sharing the same physical space, each working at his or her own pace within an overall framework established by the School Marm of myth and legend. By taking advantage of the technology that is now at our disposal, teachers can turn their attention to teaching students how to learn, rather than instructing them in what they have to know. The difference is essential to our approach to education. In the traditional educational model, teachers are expected to be experts in a particular discipline, guiding the student through the intricacies of history, math, English and science. One of the problems with current educational systems is that, in reality, teachers are rarely experts in the disciplines they are being asked to teach. In our environment, teachers are expected to be experts in learning, not masters of any specific discipline.

With computer assisted education, it no longer matters when a student comes to school, or how many hours a day it takes the student to complete his or her assignments. Faster students can do more, while slower students take longer or do less, but the net result is that students are no longer competing against each other, as they are now, but are instead working against objective standard that they can use to evaluate their own progress.

With the technology that is now at our disposal, anyone can find virtually any piece of information they need - if they know how to find it. Knowing how to learn, the process of breaking down large amounts of information into smaller, more easily absorbed pieces, along with the process of breaking down large tasks into smaller, more easily accomplished ones, is a teachable and learnable discipline that gives the student a model for how to identify and resolve problems that can be carried over into every aspect of the student's life.

Education in 15 Minute Segments

We are all painfully aware that fewer than 50% of our teenagers are finishing high school. This program is designed to address this problem by making school more interesting, bringing new technology to bear on the age-old problem of how to keep kids in school when they would rather be outside doing other things.

We address this problem by building frequent rest periods into the academic portion of the day. Most public school classes are calibrated for 45 minute segments. In some school systems (notably Gloucester), economic considerations and ill-considered pedagogical theories have led to 95 minute classes. This model directly contradicts the normal life experience of the average teenager.

Radio stations play music in 15 minute segments. Television stations air programs in 15 minute segments. The average video game runs approximately 15 minutes. The 15 minute pattern is now becoming well-established in our culture and, as a result, we have built our curriculum around 15 minute segments, with five minute pauses between segments. We expect this approach to resonate with the attention span of our target population by giving them good education in small portions, leaving them hungry and asking for more.

A New Model For Vocational Education

Fifteen minute work segments alone will not counterbalance the intensively didactic flavor of computerized educational instruction. We will therefore balance the academics with an apprenticeship system designed to expose students to a variety of occupations, help inculcate good working habits, and enable them to earn substantial amounts of money while acquiring marketable skills.

Vocational training has fallen to a low ebb in the public school system. In the private school environment, it is non-existent. Most schools are not training students for jobs that really exist in today's economy, and many of the jobs for which students are being trained will no longer exist when they are ready to join the work force. Many employers report that today's high school graduates do not have the academic or technical skills to qualify for even entry level positions, nor do they have the personal motivation or work habits required of a good employee.

A good body and fender person can earn \$50,000 a year, a decent middle class income for a family of four, and considerably more than the average policeman or school teacher, but there are few schools presently teaching this highly desired trade. The same is true for auto mechanics, machinists, chefs, beauticians, and a whole host of other blue collar occupations that actually earn more than many white collar jobs.

The problem, of course, is economic. No school system has the funds to implement a really effective vocational training program because there are simply too many different occupations for which students might wish to be trained. As a result, we offer training in a few occupations, and pretend that the others don't exist.

We believe that we have solved this problem by developing an apprenticeship training program that utilizes the energies of accomplished individuals in a wide variety of fields as mentors to small groups of students who have indicated an interest in learning about the mentors' areas of expertise.

The intention of this program is to give students actual working experiences in a wide variety of occupational activities, rather than an intensive experience in a single field of activity. The purpose behind this intention is to give students 'a taste' of several different business opportunities so that they can make a more informed assessment of where their long-term interests might lay.

One of the underlying premises at work here is that the students in our target population often need to earn a living in addition to acquiring an education. Even if they don't have a pressing need to earn a living, we know that we are competing for their attention with a street life that does offer them what appears an easy way to earn a rich living. Therefore, we must find a mechanism to 'underwrite' their interest in gaining an education with their interest in earning some pocket money.

Because of the unique structure of the Gloucester Youth Partnership Charter School, we believe that we will be able to compensate mentors for their services, and underwrite the activities of the students so that they can show a profit on their apprenticeship activities.

While students will be permitted to express and pursue their own individual academic and vocational interests, the Gloucester Youth Partnership Charter School will also provide a multiple choice menu of academic and vocational choices that will require students to complete a curriculum that will ensure that the course of study would result in a well-rounded individual.

Achieving Competency instead of Serving Time

By implementing a self-directed, goal-oriented, competency-based educational program, we are moving toward a model in which a student who can demonstrate proficiency in any given subject *DOES NOT HAVE TO TAKE THAT SUBJECT*. This change, from a 'penal institution' educational model in which students serve time and get certified, to an achievement-oriented model where success is measured in terms of the results rather than survival, is made possible by the 'one room school house of the future' model in which students learn individually at their own pace rather than in groups at a pace determined by the instructor on the basis of the performance of the poorest performing students in that class.

11. Student Performance

A. Assessing Student Performance

Whatever their individual characteristics, all educational institutions must evaluate their students on the basis of the four 'A's' of education: attendance, attention, application, and achievement.

Attendance

Even though this is a self-paced, student-controlled environment, the student cannot be learning if the student is not present. While strenuous efforts will be made to encourage students to attend classes, those who do not conform to minimum attendance requirements (NO unexcused absences!) will be dismissed from the program on the third occurrence.

Attention

Students can be at school, but not be in school. Attendance without attention to the work at hand will not be tolerated. Students who are disruptive, unproductive, or unable to focus on their work will be dismissed from the program. Attention is measured by classroom participation, engagement in the apprenticeship programs, and participation in artistic, athletic and recreational activities.

Application

It is our belief that any student can prosper from their participation in this educational model, if they apply themselves to the learning tasks they have undertaken. Failure to undertake the requisite tasks - as identified in the student's individualized learning plan - will be considered evidence of a failure of application.

Achievement

The ultimate evaluation of any educational process is, of course, the achievement of the student. If the student hasn't tried, the failure belongs to the student. If the student has tried, but has not learned, the failure must belong to the school, not the student. Education is the only area of human activity where the customer is blamed for the vendor's failure.

Nevertheless, we must evaluate both academic and non-academic performance in that manner that is consistent with the expectations of government, colleges, other institutions of higher learning, and employers.

The proposed educational model raises some difficult questions about how to evaluate a student's progress in a self-paced educational environment, which is further complicated by the entire question of ethnic, cultural and gender biases that exist in any standardized testing system.

Numerous questions have been raised about the validity of standardized examinations, many of which - it is charged - are biased against ethnic, cultural, and linguistic minorities, and against women. More importantly, all information-based examinations are biased toward one kind of intelligence, which we might call verbal-academic intelligence, and favor students with good memories over students with poor memories. As a result, a student who is a superb problem-solver, a gifted performer, an empathic consoler, or an inspired artist - but has a poor memory for facts and figures - will test far lower than a more pedestrian student who happens to have a good memory.

The problem with these outcome-oriented examinations is that all they can measure is the amount of information that the student has retained. They do not measure either basic intelligence or the development and implementation of learning and thinking strategies that will help students with memory deficit problems to cope with their special learning requirements.

As an educational institution, we must warrant that students who have graduated from our program have achieved certain minimum performance standards in terms of basic academic skills, but we must also document and show approval for the other skills that our students will learn to develop during their tenure with us.

Therefore, with these issues in mind, we are proposing to use a combination of techniques based upon the 'demonstrated competency' model now being used on the college level.

The Competency-Based Educational Model

In the competency based educational model, students select the courses they will take each semester, and present a plan that identifies the subjects they will take and the outcomes they expect to achieve. These plans are presented in writing to head teacher, who must approve each student's learning plan for each semester.

The learning plan forms a contractual agreement between the student and the school documenting what the student will accomplish during the next semester. It also provides a basis of evaluating both attention and application, and gives the head teacher a tool for evaluating whether a student's activities conform to the student's learning objectives.

Each unit of study requires that students pass examinations that are built into the computer software in order to move on to the next unit of study. Successful completion of each unit also earns the student additional credits that may be used to purchase time in the optional programs (games, interactive, video, access to Internet, etc.)

Students may complete each competency by finishing the course work, opting to take an examination to prove their competency instead of doing the course work, or by taking on a special project associated with the course work (with the prior approval of the head teacher.) This gives each student at least three different ways to demonstrate their individual mastery of a given subject.

B: Measuring Skill Development

Academic certification can be accomplished through the use of standardized examinations such as those used in the G.E.D. certification process. This is, however, only one of several criteria that must be accomplished.

One of the problems with existing educational methodologies is that students do not get accurate and timely information on their performance. Quarterly report cards do not provide adequate motivational feedback about the student's performance.

The Gloucester Youth Partnership Charter School will use a cumulative reporting system that will incorporate weekly summaries of each student's performance that cumulatively rates their performance in a percentage of efficiency rather than an outcome variable that reflects knowledge retention.

Weekly summaries will be compiled into monthly reports that will document the teachers' perceptions, which will be augmented by the student's own self-assessments contained in the monthly updates of the student's learning plans and progress reports.

Documentation of non-academic skills development will be achieved through three mechanisms: documentation, demonstration, and evaluation. Students will be required to submit documentation from their mentors establishing that they have participated in and completed each non-academic competency. In addition, students will be asked to demonstrate skills that have developed in regular seminars. Finally, the mentors who have worked with the student in each venue will be required to submit an evaluation report documenting the mentor's assessment of the student's performance in each unit of study.

Remedial Education for Underachieving Students

Under the proposed educational model, the very concept of 'remedial' education comes into question. Students proceeding at their own individual paces, working on different subject and different levels at the same time, raises uncomfortable questions about age appropriate education, in which the school system determines what a student should know at any given age.

Using the mentorship approach, with a 12-1 student teacher ratio, and focuses the teacher's energies on tutoring rather than rote memorization exercises, we believe that there will be little or no need for remedial instruction. Where this need does arise, the student in question can be given additional individual instruction using specialized computer software designed to help the student review and re-learn the subjects in which the student is not making progress.

In the case of special needs students with 'learning' disabilities, there is special software available that will help these students develop compensatory strategies that will enable them to cope with a wide variety of educational problems. With more extreme cases, where there are physiological or psychological problems, students will be referred to the local school system for 766 Core evaluations and consequential services.

12. School Evaluation

A. Program Evaluation Methodology

The operational design of the Gloucester Youth Partnership Charter School lends itself to a progressive program evaluation methodology. The school will evaluate its performance according to the following criteria:

Student attendance records will be used to document the school's ability to maintain the interest and commitment of its students.

Student performance statistics will be compiled on a monthly and quarterly basis to serve as the foundation for a statistical evaluation of the school's performance. Increasing cumulative performance statistics among the study body would be indicative of an effective educational program.

Comparative student performance statistics measuring performance of the school's students against other students in the same age category via standardized examinations will document the effectiveness of the school's methodologies against other competing methodologies.

Other measures of school performance will include drop-out rates among students, the percentage of students completing work study projects, the percentage of students undertaking apprenticeship programs, the percentage of students completing apprenticeship programs, and the number of students who report securing jobs on the basis of apprenticeship experiences.

B. Parent Teacher Communications

Students, parents and teachers will meet together with the Board of Trustees on no less than a monthly basis throughout the school year to facilitate communication and decision making about the development of the school. In addition, there will be a regular weekly newsletter - published by students themselves - for students, parents and teachers. Regular monthly meetings with parents will be offered as an option, but the teaching staff will meet with the students and their parents at least every other month to discuss the student's progress in the program.

C. School-Community Communications

The school newsletter will be published and distributed to any member of the community who wishes to subscribe. In addition, there will be four open houses each year during which the public will be invited to visit the school and see the work that is going on there.

13. Human Resource Information

A. Staff Selection Process

A head teacher will be selected to be the academic head of the school by the members of the Board of Trustees. This individual must possess at least a masters' degree in Education, and must also have significant experience in computer-aided instruction and community teaching. Once hired, the head teacher will be responsible for the recruitment and hiring of two additional associate teachers, one of whom must have a master's in education and have previous experience in computer-aided education. The other associate must have at least a master's degree in counseling and possess previous experience counseling in a school environment, as well as documented teaching experience. All instructors must also be Massachusetts certified, and have a minimum of three years previous teaching experience. It is important to note that the instructional staff will be augmented by a team of mentors recruited from the community, who will administer and deliver non-academic classes, including the work-study and the apprenticeship curricula. Because of this unique design, it is impossible to estimate the prospective size of the staff, but we can posit that we will have approximately 36 mentors serving at least three weeks each during the course of the semester in addition to three full-time instructors, who will work on a 12-1 student teacher ratio.

B. Staff and Teacher Evaluation

Administrative staff will be evaluated on the basis of the delivery of services according to prescribed schedules. Academic staff will be evaluated by several different mechanisms. There will be a formal student evaluation process for both academic instructors and the mentors that will be used to determine student perceptions of teacher performance. Instructional staff will also be evaluated on the basis of student performance.

C. Relevant Employee Information

The salary range for the head teacher will be \$30,000 - \$36,000; the salary range for associate teachers will be \$24,000 - \$30,000. The fringe benefit package will include a health care plan, extended vacations, a tuition reimbursement, and a contributory pension plan. All teachers will be hired provisionally on a one-year trial basis. After the first year, teachers will be hired under an annual contract basis. Dismissal for non-performance will follow the third warning letter for any combination of infringements, and may be appealed to the Board of Trustees, which shall conduct an open hearing on any charges brought before it by the school's administrator.

14. School Governance

A. Internal management

Internal management of the school's operations will be the responsibility of the school's appointed Head Teacher, who will meet with the Associate Teachers on a weekly basis to review the performance of the school and plot the ongoing development of the curriculum and the school.

B. Selection of the Board of Trustees

The board of trustees will be selected by the founders. Once established, the board will select individuals to augment or replace the original members.

C. Describe the roles and responsibilities of Board members

Board members will be responsible for the overall supervision of the Gloucester Youth Partnership Charter School, including supervisory responsibility over financial affairs, services delivery, staff management and personnel issues.

D. Describe relationship of the Board to teachers, administrators, students and families

The head teacher will be directly responsible to the Board of Directors, and will report to the board on a monthly basis on all issues relative to the operation of the school. All board meetings will be open to students and their families, as well as members of the general public. The minutes from all board meetings will be published and distributed to students and their parents.

E. Student-Parent Involvement in decision making

Once the school has been established, any major changes in the structure or operation of the school will be presented to the students and their parents at the next regular meeting of the school community for review and comment before any changes are finalized. Students and parents may propose changes to the Board of Trustees, which may take recommendations under consideration for further action.

F. Describe the nature and extent of community involvement

One of the more unique aspects of the proposed program is that it relies to a large extent upon the development and implementation of a combination of work-study mentorships, apprenticeship programs, and tutorial services which shall be delivered by volunteers recruited from Gloucester and the surrounding communities. This larger community of 'community educators' will form a widespread support group for the Gloucester Youth Partnership Charter School, and will require an ongoing communications structure. This structure shall consist of the distribution of the weekly newsletter, and the monthly community meetings describe above.

15. Building Options**A. Discussion of Physical Plant Considerations**

The Gloucester Youth Partnership Charter School is considering a model that will not require a large investment in a physical plant. On the contrary, the decentralized, community-wide school, with students working on several different projects at different sites at the same time appeals to us because it keeps costs low, involves more members of the community in the school's activities and promotes a sense of community ownership of the enterprise. Sites for large group meetings are available from local churches, at City Hall, in various lodges and civic associations, and from a number of hotels and conference centers that are available at little or no cost during the winter months.

B. Suitability of Site

The storefront site that has been proposed for the academic center is in keeping with the community-based service model that we are utilizing in the development of this program. The use of downtown storefronts in an easily accessible location in an area noted for high drop-out rates and associated educational problems among local residents supports the objective of bringing education to the people rather than bringing the people to education.

C. Plans for Acquisition of School Building

There are no plans to acquire a subsequent facility for this program.

D. Describe Financing Plans for Plant Acquisition

Occupancy requirements for this program will be met through leasing on an interim basis and soliciting contributions of space from local businesses.